

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2005-2006



About the Alberta Water Council

The Alberta Water Council is a multi-stakeholder partnership with 25 members from governments, industry, and non-government organizations. All members have a vested interest in water. The Council's primary task is to monitor and steward implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy and to champion achievement of the strategy's three outcomes:

- Safe, secure drinking water supply,
- Healthy aquatic ecosystems, and
- Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

The Council reports directly to the Minister of Environment. While it provides guidance, the Government of Alberta remains accountable for the implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy, and continues to administer water and watershed management activities throughout the province.

Vision

All Albertans are water stewards, working together to ensure safe, healthy and abundant water for a high quality of life for future generations.

Mission

The Alberta Water Council is a stakeholder partnership that provides leadership, expertise and advocacy, to engage and empower individuals, organizations, business and governments to achieve the outcomes of the *Water for Life* strategy.

About this Report

This is the Council's second annual report. It covers the period from October 2005 to December 2006. The Council intends to incorporate in 2007 as a not-for-profit society with a year-end of December 31; the annual report generally aligns with this date.

All Council documents are available online at www.waterforlife.ab.ca.

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Highlights

Second Review Report on Implementation Progress

The Council completed its second review report on progress in implementing the *Water for Life* strategy. The report acknowledges the good foundation that has been laid in the first implementation phase for specific commitments and programs, and stresses that this is an opportune time to renew the *Water for Life* strategy.

Water Research Strategy

The Alberta Science and Research Authority, in collaboration with the Council, produced the *Water Research Strategy* to address the knowledge needs identified in the *Water for Life* strategy. The *Water Research Strategy* identifies areas for initial focus as well as other priorities for research and innovation activity. In November 2006, the Government of Alberta announced a \$30-million allocation to begin implementing the research strategy.

Outreach and Planning

Members worked hard to expand the Council's outreach by contributing articles to sector periodicals and responding to requests for interviews with both print and electronic media. A new communications plan was prepared to enhance Council's outreach, and will be implemented in 2007. Council also undertook a comprehensive strategic planning exercise that resulted in the development and approval of its 2006 – 09 business plan.

Expanded Understanding of Water Issues

This year Council continued to expand its understanding of a range of issues and the challenges that sectors and communities face in using and managing water. Members participated in two tours, the first one hosted by TransAlta Corporation to their hydroelectric facilities west of Calgary. The second tour featured a visit to three Aboriginal communities near Lesser Slave Lake, focusing on drinking water treatment facilities. The Council continued to tap into the extensive water expertise available in Alberta by inviting presentations on various topics.

Transition to an Independent Organization

With guidance from the Transition Sub-committee, Council began the transition to an independent organization by drafting bylaws and preparing to incorporate as a not-for-profit society with its own secretariat.

Message to Albertans from the Council Executive

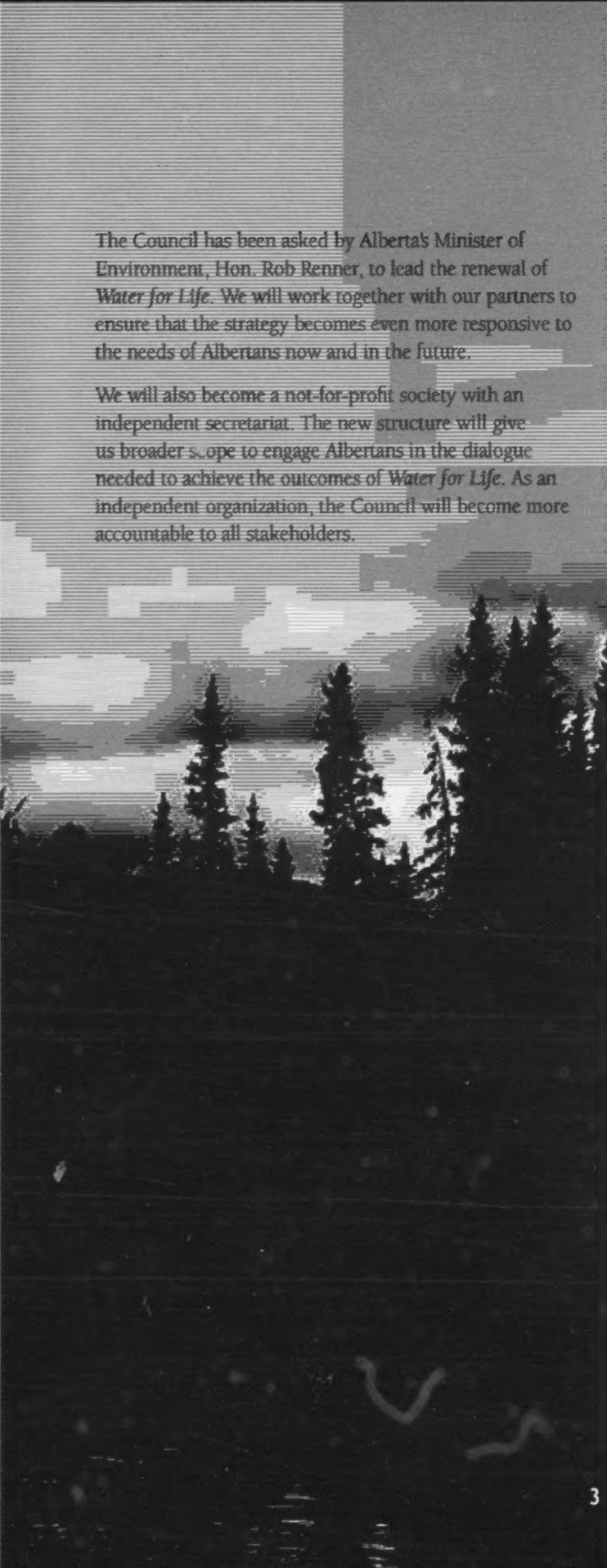
Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy was launched in 2003 with three goals: safe drinking water, healthy aquatic ecosystems and a reliable water supply for a sustainable economy. The strategy, prepared for Albertans by Albertans, is acknowledged around the world for its depth, breadth, ambition and leadership.

As *Water for Life* enters its fourth year, it faces some significant challenges; a changing climate, growing population and booming economy have all placed unprecedented pressure on our finite water supplies. There is a need to act even more quickly and decisively to address the requirements of Albertans for today and for the future.

Your Alberta Water Council is helping to lead the charge.

2006 saw action on many fronts. Our Wetlands Policy Team has gathered input from experts from across the province and is preparing for wider consultation with Albertans. Our Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definitions Team completed foundational work that sectors will use to develop their conservation, efficiency and productivity plans. Our Policy Gaps Team is finalizing a map of key issues that will help us identify the legislative or regulatory opportunities for greatest improvement in water management in the province. Our Shared Governance Team has begun mapping out how Albertans can align their leadership and share in delivering outcomes within the complex water agenda. This is just some of the work we are stewarding.

For all of 2006's promise, 2007 is shaping up to be a year of delivery.



The Council has been asked by Alberta's Minister of Environment, Hon. Rob Renner, to lead the renewal of *Water for Life*. We will work together with our partners to ensure that the strategy becomes even more responsive to the needs of Albertans now and in the future.

We will also become a not-for-profit society with an independent secretariat. The new structure will give us broader scope to engage Albertans in the dialogue needed to achieve the outcomes of *Water for Life*. As an independent organization, the Council will become more accountable to all stakeholders.

Other activities on the horizon include:

- The completion of a Framework for Watershed Management Planning to guide Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and provide a foundation for work by other Council teams.
- The completion of a draft Wetland Policy by the end of 2007.
- Development of measures to assess and evaluate the Council's performance.
- Enhanced outreach and communications. Our Communications Committee will be developing a range of materials to enhance awareness and understanding of the Council, and to encourage Albertans to learn more about water and their role in conserving this precious resource.

Much is happening at your Alberta Water Council. With your continued interest and your help, we know we can achieve the future promised under *Water for Life*.

April 2007

Council Activities and Progress

Led by the Business Plan Sub-committee, Council undertook several strategic planning sessions in late 2005 and early 2006. All members participated in these sessions. The result was the 2006 – 2009 Business Plan, approved by Council in March 2006. The plan sets the strategic priorities and will guide the Council's work from 2006 – 2009. In support of a systems approach to managing water in Alberta, the Business Plan contains two goals along with eight strategies to achieve the goals.

Council members affirmed the importance of making progress on all eight strategies, but with guidance from the Sub-committee, focused on five strategic priorities (see the table below) to define its 2006 – 2007 Operational Plan. During the 2007 update of the Operational Plan, Council will begin developing performance measures to gauge its progress toward the goals described in the Business Plan. The Sub-committee will update the Operational Plan each year and lead the preparation of a new three-year business plan when required.

¹ The 2006 – 2009 Business Plan, along with other Council documents, is available on the Council's website at www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca.

Goal 1: Alberta has an effective, adaptive water management system to achieve the three *Water for Life* goals.

Strategic Priority	Activity and Progress in 2006
Oversight: Guide, direct, assess and report on the effectiveness of implementation of the <i>Water for Life</i> strategy.	■ Completed second annual Progress of Implementation Review Report.
Policy Advice: Ensure comprehensive and integrated policies are in place to support effective water management systems	■ Completed initial consultation on a new wetland policy, as well as the first draft of a workbook for use in further public consultations in 2007. ■ Began assessment of policy issues and gaps to determine priority areas and recommend changes to address these priority areas.
Advocacy: Be a catalyst for the improvement of the water management system.	■ Developed definitions for water conservation, efficiency and productivity, and compiled sample conservation, efficiency and productivity performance measures for several sectors. ■ Began to develop terms of reference for the sector plan team.
Knowledge and Research: Identify priority water knowledge and research needs in Alberta and ensure they are met.	■ In collaboration with the Alberta Science and Research Authority, developed the <i>Alberta Water Research Strategy</i>. ■ Began to identify required resource information in priority policy areas.

Goal 2: Albertans are empowered and engaged in creating shared solutions to the challenges of managing our water and watersheds.

Strategic Priority	Activity and Progress in 2006
Support WPACs and WSGs: Support and enhance effectiveness of Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups.	■ Defined terms of reference for a Shared Governance Team, which will include stewarding development of the Framework for Watershed Management Planning.

Project Teams, Working Groups and Sub-committees

Project teams, working groups and sub-committees are where much of Council's substantive work is done. Like the Council, these multi-stakeholder bodies make decisions by consensus. When the Council decides that more detailed work is needed in an area, it forms a working group to scope the issue and recommend how it could be addressed. This typically involves preparing terms of reference for a project team. Project teams are then established to investigate particular water issues thoroughly and come back to Council with a report and recommendations. Terms of reference for each team are available on the Council's website. Sub-committees have been formed to deal with matters of a more administrative nature, such as communications and business planning. Except for the Transition Sub-committee, the work of sub-committees continues from year to year.

Project Teams

Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definitions Project Team

In March 2006, the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definitions Project Team was directed by Council to undertake initial foundational work in three areas:

1. Provide clear, understandable definitions, principles and expectations for the terms "conservation", "efficiency" and "productivity."
2. Determine baseline information and information gaps on water conservation, efficiency and productivity.
3. Determine appropriate methodologies for reporting progress on conservation, efficiency and productivity.

The team created fundamental starting points on which sectors and Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) can build, by identifying desired outcomes of improvements in water conservation, efficiency and productivity, and recommending eight principles to guide these improvements. Members also agreed on definitions for water conservation, efficiency and productivity. The team was of the view that WPACs are the best mechanism for developing watershed management plans. Members also recognized that WPACs need clear authority and a mandate to develop their plans through a collaborative process, and a mechanism is needed if agreement on the plans and an implementation strategy cannot be reached. The team specifically noted a need for better integration of processes to manage resources, particularly water and land, and Council asked the Shared Governance Working Group to consider how this matter could be addressed.

The work of this team also launched the Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan Working Group.



Policy Issues and Gaps Project Team

Providing policy advice to the Government of Alberta is one of the Council's strategic priorities, with the aim of ensuring that comprehensive and integrated policies are in place to support effective water management systems. Council established the Policy Issues and Gaps Project Team in May 2006 to develop a process for identifying policy and legislative issues and gaps, and recommend approaches to address them.

As part of the first phase of work, the team engaged provincial subject matter experts from over 200 organizations to help compile an inventory of water outcomes and management policies. These experts also helped develop an initial list of policy issues and gaps, which was finalized in December 2006; a workshop with subject matter experts will be held early in 2007, followed by a final report to Council summarizing the team's work.

Reporting Project Team

To ensure efficiency in the reporting process, Council formed a Reporting Project Team in 2005 to oversee production of two documents: the Council's annual report and the review report on progress in implementing the *Water for Life* strategy.

The team assessed progress on the three outcomes and three directions of *Water for Life* by reviewing the Government's 2005 – 2006 implementation progress and interviewing the coordinators for each area. Although there has been more progress in some areas than others, considerable new activity has occurred in the last three years in response to the *Water for Life* strategy. These actions have established a good foundation for future initiatives and this stage of strategy implementation presents a critical and timely opportunity to build on the success to date. This is an opportune time to renew the *Water for Life* strategy by addressing specific needs and priorities and committing the necessary support.

Water Management Knowledge Broker Function Project Team

As Alberta's *Water Research Strategy* clearly notes, resource information and knowledge is the foundation for effective water management decisions. Many gaps currently exist in this knowledge and information base. In late 2005, the Council agreed that a knowledge broker function could help identify and prioritize knowledge needs and facilitate meeting those needs. A project team was formed in early 2006 to develop a model for the knowledge system, clarify the role a knowledge broker could play, and recommend to Council a framework that would address the water knowledge challenges.

The team's model envisions that a knowledge broker would:

- Link water management decision makers with the information they need to make effective outcome-related decisions, and
- Identify and prioritize knowledge needs and gaps to enable focused research and effective use of scarce resources.

Because a number of other related activities are coming forward in 2007 from various agencies, this team has decided to pause in its work until some of these initiatives are in place. Opportunities will be reassessed at a future date.

Wetland Policy Project Team

Wetlands are an important and valuable natural resource, providing a wide range of economic, cultural, social and aesthetic benefits that help to maintain healthy and functioning watersheds. In 1993, Alberta released *Wetland Management in the Settled Area of Alberta, An Interim Policy*. The Council was asked by the Government of Alberta to develop a policy and implementation plan for the entire province. An implementation plan will ensure the new policy achieves the desired goals and will provide guidance to land and water managers.

In the fall of 2005, the Wetland Policy Project Team consulted with invited stakeholders as well as government and Aboriginal representatives. This first round of consultation enabled the team to begin framing concepts and ideas for an eventual policy and implementation plan. The team then developed a workbook to use as the basis for further public consultations planned for 2007. Input from these consultations will assist the team in further refining the concepts and content for a draft policy and implementation plan.



Working Groups

Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan Working Group

Another important approach to improving water conservation, efficiency and productivity in Alberta is the development of sector plans. Late in 2006, the Council established a working group to prepare terms of reference for a Sector Plan Project Team. The project team's main task will be to propose a framework that lays out the expectations and provides guidance for groups that will ultimately do plans for their specific sectors. These plans will describe strategies for implementation and for developing and applying a range of performance measures for each sector that uses water, from municipalities to irrigation, power generation, oil and gas, and others. The working group aims to present draft terms of reference for a Sector Plan Project Team to Council for review in early 2007.

Shared Governance Working Group

The key task for the Shared Governance Working Group is to draft terms of reference for a Shared Governance Project Team. The terms of reference will provide direction to the team to produce two documents:

- a) Shared Governance Framework: a document that describes the roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and relationships involved in shared governance and the process by which shared governance can be established and maintained; and

- b) Watershed Management Planning Framework: a document that describes the contents of and how to develop watershed management plans, who is involved, the relationships to other planning, approval and implementation of plans, and the integration with shared governance.

In late 2006, the working group presented a series of draft core statements to Council for discussion and comment, one of which notes the need for an explicit and timely connection between the Land Use Framework and the frameworks for shared governance and watershed management planning. These statements were used to prepare draft terms of reference for a project team. The shared governance work and the watershed management planning framework will be important foundations for other Council activities and projects.

Water Resource Information Working Group

The overall goal of this working group is to identify and champion the resolution of high priority, system-wide water resource information requirements, including but not limited to the priority policy areas of groundwater, wetlands, and instream flow needs. The group also aims to influence the collection of priority water resource information by communicating requirements to the appropriate agencies and organizations, and to advocate for ready accessibility to water resource information. An early task involves developing a survey that will be sent to stakeholders to assess their data needs. The work from this group will support the efforts of the Knowledge Broker function.



David Hill

Sub-committees

In addition to the two Sub-committees noted below, the Council has also established two other Sub-committees whose work is described elsewhere. The work of the Business Plan Sub-committee is noted under "Council Activities and Progress", and the Transition Sub-committee's work is described in the following section, "The Transition to an Independent Organization."

Communications Strategy Sub-committee

In the Council's strategic planning discussions, members agreed that communications should receive increased emphasis. A communications strategy would identify what the Council wants to communicate and to whom, as well as potential avenues for getting the messages out. In 2006, a Communications Strategy Sub-committee was formed. The sub-committee developed a comprehensive plan to help the Council reach its target audiences in a timely and effective manner. Communications and outreach will be increased as the Council completes the transition to an independent organization in 2017.

Water Research Steering Committee

The Alberta Science and Research Authority (ASRA), in collaboration with the Council established the Water Research Steering Committee, comprising members of both organizations. Their task was to guide the development of a water research strategy for Alberta. The strategy was developed with regard to:

- Alberta's policy and strategic framework related to water as identified in various existing strategies,
- The national and international water and water research context, and
- The views of Alberta's water and water research stakeholders.

The *Alberta Water Research Strategy* was published in 2006 by ASRA and is available at <http://www.asra.ab.ca>.



The Transition to an Independent Organization

Following several formal discussions among Council members and information exchange with the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA), the Council decided in early 2006 to proceed with the transition to an independent organization, based generally on the CASA model. A multi-stakeholder Transition Sub-committee was formed to explore options and bring forward recommendations.

In September, the Sub-committee presented a transition package to Council, which included draft objects and bylaws for the proposed not-for-profit society. This package was approved by Council. The objects of the new society include:

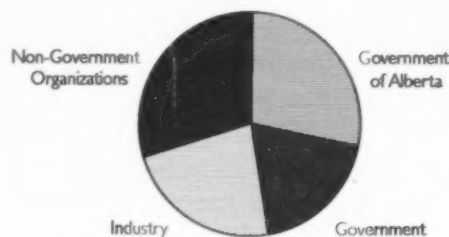
- a) Develop, recommend and advise on policies to ensure integrated and comprehensive support for effective watershed management systems in Alberta;
- b) Advocate for and catalyze improvements to Alberta's watershed management systems;

- c) Identify priority water knowledge and research needs in Alberta and advocate that these needs be met;
- d) Support and enhance the effectiveness of local and regional watershed groups;
- e) Influence Albertans and sectors to improve their water management practices and performance;
- f) Guide, assess and report on the effectiveness of the implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy.

There was agreement to retain the current structure, with four broad categories of members, and to increase the number of seats on the new board for both the environmental non-government representatives and First Nations. The new not-for-profit society will be supported by an independent secretariat based in Edmonton and headed by an executive director. Similar to CASA, core funding will be provided by the Government of Alberta.

Funding

The Government of Alberta, through Alberta Environment, funds the core operations of the Alberta Water Council and its teams. Industry, government and non-government organizations have provided in-kind support for Council teams, largely through the participation of their staff. A number of organizations have also hosted meetings and other events. The Council has tried to assign a dollar value to this support by examining time and travel costs and other contributions, but can confidently say that the true value of these contributions is both under-recorded and underestimated.



Government of Alberta	\$160,712.50
Government	\$105,915.50
Industry	\$133,650.00
Non-Government Organizations	\$165,250.00
In Kind Contribution Total	\$565,525.00



Members of the Council

Members gave generously of their time and expertise to advance the Council's work during this foundational year. The following were Council members as of December 2006.

Broad Category	Representative	Alternate
Industry		
Chemical and Petrochemical	Al Kennedy	
Forestry	Keith Murray	
Irrigation	David Hill	Jim Csabay
Livestock	Larry Nolan	Jack DeBoer
Mining	Judy Smith	Don Thompson
Oil and Gas	Kevin Stashin	
Power Generation	Mike Kelly	Jim Hackett
Non-Government Organization		
Environmental	Danielle Droitsch	Cheryl Bradley
Fishery Habitat Conservation	Ron Pearson	Doug Cressman
Lake Environment Conservation	Jay White	
Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils	Bill Berzins	Frank Vagi
Wetland Conservation	Jonathan Thompson	Les Wetter
Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities		
Alberta Agriculture and Food	John Donner	John Hermans
Alberta Economic Development Authority	Kim Sturgess	
Alberta Energy	Joe Miller	Sharla Rauschnig
Alberta Environment	Peter Watson	Beverly Yee
Alberta Health and Wellness	Nicholas Bayliss	Gloria Keays
Alberta Science and Research Authority	Linda Van Gastel	Don Harrison
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	Brad Pickering	Joyce Ingram
Other Government		
Federal	Jim Vollmershausen	Susanne Forbrich
First Nations	Lisa King	
Large Urban	Al Maurer	Rob Pritchard
Métis Settlements	Gerald Cunningham	Tim LeClair
Rural	Brian Hammond	
Small Urban	Richard Quail	Rachel Bocco

The Council gratefully acknowledges members Bob Barss, Rick Denton, John Knapp and Margaret Reine who stepped down between September 2005 and December 2006.



Secretariat

The following individuals, all employees of the Government of Alberta, have generously and capably provided secretariat and administrative support to the Council and its teams.

Giselle Beaudry
Susan Campbell
Sean Douglas
Shannon Flint
Silvie Forest
Rick George
Robert Harrison
Robyn Kuhn

Carol Mak
Andy Ridge
Petra Rowell
Terry Sly
Tim Toth
Lorie Wagner
Neil Wandler

Members of Project Teams, Working Groups and Sub-committees

The following individuals have given their time and expertise on Council working groups, project teams and sub-committees over the last 16 months. They and the organizations with which they are affiliated are acknowledged for their commitment and support.

Wendy Aupers
Marge Bell
Ron Bennett
Bill Berzins
Diana Boylen
Mark Brostrom
Brian Calliou
Bob Cameron
Claude Chamberland
Darrel Danyluk
Bob Demulder
John Donner
Danielle Droitsch
Livio Fent
Paul Fesko
Susanne Forbrich
Les Gammie
Melanie Gray
Gerry Haelkel
Denise Hammel
Don Harrison

David Hill
Scott Hillier
Roger Hohm
Bill Hunter
Joyce Ingram
Lee Jenkins
Mike Kelly
Al Kennedy
Dave Kiely
Lisa King
Phyllis Kobasiuk
Martha Kostuch
Arlene Kwasniak
Claudette Lacombe
Cam Lane
Tim LeClair
Keith Leggat
Maureen Lynch
Bunny Mah
Grant McIntyre
Joe Miller

Blake Mills
Steve Moran
Audrey Murray
Keith Murray
George Murphy
Ted Nason
Jacqueline Nelson
Lori Neufeld
Kevin Parks
Sian Pascoe
Grant Pearsell
Ron Pearson
Jaco Poot
Richard Quail
Margaret Reine
Ron Renwick
Kate Rich
Ian Rudland
Tracy Scott
Carrie Selin
Sherwin Shih

Judy Smith
Kevin Stashin
Kevin Stephenson
Judy Stewart
Kim Sturgess
Bill Symonds
John Taggart
Jonathan Thompson
Heinz Unger
Jason Unger
Linda Van Gastel
Jim Vollmershausen
Peter Watson
Jim Webber
Les Wetter
Jay White
Edna Willier
Bev Yee
Brian Yee

Organizations

The following organizations have supported the Alberta Water Council through their generous in-kind contributions. These commitments have been instrumental in helping the Council undertake its work and are deeply appreciated.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Alberta Advanced Education and Technology
Alberta Agriculture and Food
Alberta Association of Municipal
Districts & Counties
Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association
Alberta Economic Development Authority
Alberta Energy
Alberta Energy and Utilities Board
Alberta Environment
Alberta Forest Products Association
Alberta Health and Wellness
Alberta Irrigation Projects Association
Alberta Lake Management Society
Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing
Alberta Pork
Alberta Science and Research Authority
Alberta Stewardship Network
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
Alberta Wilderness Association
ATCO Power Ltd.
Athabasca-Chipewyan First Nation
Bow River Basin Council
Bow RiverKeeper

Canadian Federation of University Women,
Edmonton
Canadian Petroleum Products Institute
City of Brooks
City of Calgary
City of Edmonton
Clean Air Strategic Alliance
ConocoPhillips
Devon Canada
Driftpile First Nation
Ducks Unlimited Canada
East Prairie Métis Settlement
Environment Canada
Environmental Law Centre
EPCOR
First Nations (Alberta) Technical Services
Advisory Group
Fossil Water Corporation
Friends of the Oldman River
Imperial Oil
Intensive Livestock Working Group
Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council
Métis Settlements General Council
Mikisew Cree First Nation
Natural Resources Canada
North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance

NOVA Chemicals Corporation
Parkland County
Pembina Institute
Petro-Canada
Shell Canada Ltd.
South Peace Environmental Association
St. Mary's River Irrigation District
Sucker Creek First Nation
Syncrude Canada Ltd.
The Banff Centre
Town of Okotoks
TransAlta Corporation
Trout Unlimited Canada
University of Calgary, Faculty of Law
Western Irrigation District

This report was published on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified paper. The FSC promotes environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.



Alberta Water Council

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